

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION TO EXAMINER GLORIA R. WEEKS

From: Kevin Pumm (314) 446-7638
Appl. 10/652,742
Re: Proposal to amend claims 31, 37, 44 & 47 (and cancel 1-30, 32, 38, 45 and 48-62)

31. (Proposed) A system for making dental prophylaxis angles, the system comprising a plurality of mounting posts, each adapted to support components of a dental prophylaxis angle as the components are being assembled into a dental prophylaxis angle, a movable table for carrying the mounting posts through a plurality of stations at which different assembly steps are performed;

a body station which takes an oriented body and places it on the mounting post at the body station;

a first gear member station which takes an oriented first gear member and places it in the body on the mounting post at the first gear member station;

a second gear member station which takes an oriented second gear member and places it in the body on the mounting post at the second gear member station; ~~[[and]]~~

a tool station which attaches a tool to the second gear member in the body on the mounting post at the tool station; and

a closing station including means for closing a hinged closure on the body to enclose the first and second gear members in the body on the mounting post at the closing station.

37. (Proposed) A system for making dental prophylaxis angles, the system comprising a plurality of mounting posts, each adapted to support the components of a dental prophylaxis angle as the components are being assembled into a dental prophylaxis angle, a table for carrying the mounting posts past a plurality of stations at which different assembly steps are performed;

a body feeder that orients bodies from bodies loaded therein;

a body station which takes an oriented body and places it on the mounting post at the body station;

a first gear member feeder that orients first gear members from first gear members loaded therein;

a first gear member station which takes an oriented first gear member and places it in the body on the mounting post at the first gear member station;

a second gear member feeder that orients second gear members from second gear members loaded therein;

a second gear member station which takes an oriented second gear member and places it in the body on the mounting post at the second gear member station;

a tool feeder that orients tools from tools loaded therein;

a tool station which takes an oriented tool and attaches it to the second gear member in the body on the mounting post at the tool station; and

a closing station including means for closing a hinged closure on the body to enclose the first and second gear members in the body on the mounting post at the closing station.

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44. (Proposed) A system for making dental prophylaxis angles, the system comprising a plurality of mounting posts, each adapted to support a dental prophylaxis angle as it is being assembled, the posts moving in series through a plurality of stations at which a different assembly step is performed, the assembly step at each station being performed on that dental prophylaxis angle at its respective mounting post substantially simultaneously, each mounting post having substantially the configuration of a Doriot nose for engaging the interior of the bodies without regard to their external configuration, and a passageway therein for receiving a pin translatable in the passageway.

45. (Cancelled) The system according to Claim 44 wherein each mounting post has substantially the configuration of a Doriot nose for engaging the interior of the bodies without regard to their external configuration.

46. (Original) The system according to Claim 45 wherein the mounting posts are adapted for engaging the interior of the bodies without any contact with the exterior of the bodies.

47. (Proposed) The system according to Claim 45 wherein ~~each mounting post has a passageway therein~~ the passageway is positioned to align with a first drive shaft passage in the body, when the body is mounted on the mounting post, and ~~[[a]] the pin is~~ translatable in the passageway to selectively block the seating of a drive shaft in the first drive shaft passage in the body.

With regard to claims 31 and 37, the final office action states on page 16 that claims 32 and 38 do not invoke 35 USC 112 para. 6 with respect to "means plus function", and the limitation is drawn only to a closing station. Applicant proposes amending claims 31 and 37 to include "means for closing" a hinged closure on the body as recited in claims 32 and 38, which were the subject of the examiner's search that uncovered Ilseemann. Accordingly, the Applicant submits that claims 31 and 37 do not require further consideration or an additional search, and that the structure recited in the specification is distinguished over Ilseemann, which discloses a closing station for purpose of sealing a compact disc product.

With regard to claim 47, the final office action also takes official notice that the use of "key and slot" mechanism is well known in the art. However, while the present application does describe a "key 80 ... and a Doriot slot", the subject matter of claim 47 is not a "key and slot" mechanism. As such, the final office action does not address the passageway (84) within the post (78) for receiving a pin (86) translatable in the passageway, for example as shown in Fig. 6.

If the examiner does not object to the above proposed claims, Applicant would like to submit an amendment after final to include the above amendments.